

NASA Glenn's Decommissioning Plan for Plum Brook Reactor Facility Submitted

Decommissioning of the Reactor Facility at Plum Brook Station in Sandusky, Ohio, is one step closer as a result of NASA Glenn Research Center submitting its Decommissioning Plan to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for review and approval. A more than 200-page Decommissioning Plan was compiled over the past 11 months under guidance of federal regulations.

"We have reached our first major milestone with the submittal of the Decommissioning Plan to the NRC. We look forward to a thorough review of the Plan followed by the safe decommissioning of the Reactor Facility," said Tim Polich, Glenn's Decommissioning Project Manager.

The Decommissioning Plan must demonstrate to the NRC that NASA has planned for every stage in the decommissioning process with a high priority on the protection of public health and safety. "There comes a time in the life of every facility when it needs to be safely retired. It is time to decommission Plum Brook Station's Reactor Facility, and Glenn has chosen the safest, most thorough approach for the protection of the public and the environment," said Bill Wessel, Glenn's Director of Safety and Assurance Technologies.

Recognizing the need for public input to the Decommissioning Plan, Glenn formed a Community Workgroup comprised of fifteen local Erie County residents. Glenn representatives met with this group and presented the Plan to them in early December. "The Workgroup members received the same presentation that was given to Glenn's senior management team," said Polich. "We intend to continue to be open with the public and get feedback throughout the decommissioning process," he added.

The NRC is expected to take nearly a year to review the Plan. Approval from the NRC is expected in 2001, and the decommissioning work at the Reactor Facility is slated for completion in 2007. Throughout the decommissioning process, Glenn will continue to meet with the Community Workgroup to solicit input and provide information to the public. A Community Information Bank has been established and is located in the library of Firelands College in Huron. A copy of the Decommissioning Plan and other documents related to the decommissioning process will be available in the Community Information Bank to interested community members.

The closed Reactor Facility has been in safe, dry and protected storage, held under a "Possess But Do Not Operate" license agreement with the NRC, since operations were suspended and the fuel was safely removed in 1973. The Facility contains a 60-megawatt nuclear reactor and a 100-kilowatt mock-up reactor that were used from 1962 to 1973 to study the effects of radiation on materials used in space flight.